2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
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tainship is not hereditary; the chief, when old or sick, designates his successor from the ablest men of the group. The chief's authority is slight; it depends wholly on the good will of the family heads.

Relations between neighboring bands are inspired both by fear and by the desire to exchange goods. Warfare, therefore, is closely connected with barter. Groups not acquainted with each other use ritual speech when they meet.

Before starting a war expedition, a divinatory rite is performed with special songs and dances. An arrow is hidden by the shaman, the outcome of the expedition being pressaged by its appearance the following day.

LIFE CYCLE

Childbirth.—After the delivery of a child, the placenta is buried in the bush and both parents are subjected to rigid prohibitions concerning food, the use of ornaments, and social contacts.

Puberty.—The initiation rite for young men consists of piercing their lips and nose and giving them their adult personal name. At her first menstruation, a girl is isolated for several months in a special shelter outside the village, where she is given ritual food by her mother. At the end of the rite, she takes a long bath in the river; this also constitutes the first step of the marriage ceremony.

Both cross-cousin and avuncular marriages (see p. 367), are often planned by parents for their infant children. Marriage is celebrated by festivals, banquets, and dances. The union is pronounced by the chief. Fish and fishing are important both before and during the ceremony.

Separation is frequent, the chief cause being that the man seeks a younger and prettier woman. There is no social sanction of adultery, except that the seducer is advised by his companion to go away for a while so as to avoid the husband's revenge. A murderer also flees vengeance.

Death.—Some groups of *Nambicuara* bury their dead in a circular pit, the corpse being placed in a crouching position. Others leave the corpse to decompose in an elongated ditch and later wash the bones in the river, put them in a basket, and bury them in the village, which is then abandoned. Weapons, implements, adornments, and other property of the deceased are destroyed, but his garden—if he owned one—is abandoned only for a few months. Later anybody may cultivate it.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Art.—Most *Nambicuara* groups are completely ignorant of drawing, although some groups decorate calabashes with dots and straight and sinuous lines. These are conventionalized reproductions of realistic designs found among other groups.

291 Around the waist both men and women wear a buritĺ cord; if possible, this string is strung with glass store beads. In addition, men sometimes suspend a lenth of buritĺ fiber from the front of the belt.

302 Men paint their faces with urucú, drawing a band from each side of the forehead down to the chin, another band across the eyes and bridge of the nose, and then a band from under each eye across the cheeks. On the body they draw two stripes, starting from the abdomen up to the nipples and then over to each shoulder. The arms and legs are dotted with red or black spots. The hair is seldom smeared with urucú.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

(See chart 13) 1/1

619 The names of the Eastern Nambicuara bands appear to be derived from characteristics peculiar
621 to the band territory. The Waklĺtisu are cayman people for there are many caymans (*waklisu*) in their territory. The Elótasu are open plains people, for they live on the open plain (*toku*) of the upper Camararé River. The Kitánhlu get their name from a small fruit called *tantu*. The Chiwáisu are bee people from the word *waisu*, bee. The Hégndisu are buritĺ fruit (*héeru*) people. Although these bands are not politically united under a single chief, and sometimes even resort to open conflict, they consider themselves a single people, or as Julio phrased it, "We can speak with one another and we came from the same hole in the stone mountain."

619 The origin myth of the Eastern Nambicuara, as
773 it is told among the Waklĺtisu band, can be summarized as follows:

Before the Nambicuara came there were only animals, birds, plants, and beings who could change from animal and bird to human form. At that time the Nambicuara were inside a stone mountain called *yahsindurukaisu*, which is situated north of the telegraph line near Campos Novos (roughly in the center of the territory now occupied by the Eastern Nambicuara). One day the monkeys heard people speaking inside the mountain and went to tell *oklihdilisu* who changed himself into a black and white woodpecker and flew with all his strength against the mountain. When the mountain broke some were killed and some injured but many came out alive. The ghosts of the dead people remained around the mountain where they still are and where all Nambicuara go after they die. The injured people *oklihdilisu* sent into the bush, but the people who were sound of body he put into good clean places and gave them the piuva bow and taught them how

1/1 [CAT. 116, p. 123.-Amhyst] [p. 96 (A)]

619 773 to grow manioc and sweetpotatoes. He also gave them the flute (*udúrhu*), and taught them how to sing and dance. *Ohlihdítisu* is thus the culture hero of the Nambicuara. In human form he looks like a Nambicuara Indian, wears ornaments in his ears, nose, and upper lip and paints himself with urucú. Yet today people no longer see *ohlihdítisu*, for he has gone away. They do not have rituals connected with him, nor do the shamans solicit his aid. But the stone mountain from which the Nambicuara came is still recognized as the place of the dead. On ceremonial occasions the ghosts of the ancestors come to the encampments and villages from the mountain, returning after they have been given food.

622 Although every band has a leader or chief it is not quite certain whether these leaders get their positions through succession or by personal strength and prestige. Julio claimed that he is headman because his father was a headman, but the other members of the Waklítisu band claim that the strongest man is always the leader by common agreement. The Nambicuara appear to value two qualities in a man—"a strong body" and "a strong mouth." The chief is like a tapir (*alúnsu*) which is the strongest of the animals; thus, a chief is called *alunsdidnara*. A shaman gains power by talking or by having "a strong mouth," as the Nambicuara say. The strongest man is one who combines these qualities and is at once a strong man and shaman—he becomes an important chief.

The survival of the band, the Nambicuara believe, depends upon the *alunsdidnara*. He is the hunt leader, the head farmer, the one who organizes trade between the bands, the ceremonial head, the war leader, and the settler of disputes. Every successful chief is supposed to have four wives but otherwise has nothing to distinguish him from the rest of the tribesmen.

619 Relationships between the bands of the Eastern Nambicuara are characterized by intermarriage, trade, occasional joint ceremonies, and wife stealing and consequent armed conflicts. Intermarriage occurs when cross cousins are not available for marriage within the band. The Chiwáisu and Hégndisu obtain pots from the Western Nambicuara in exchange for wax, feather ornaments, beads, and bows and arrows. These pots they in turn exchange with the Eastern Nambicuara bands for knives, axes, and tin cans.

[582] 438 619

When one band wants to meet another in order to exchange goods the approach is made in a very formal manner. The approaching band stops

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
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619 438 several hundred yards off and messengers are sent out to arrange a meeting. When agreement is reached the visiting band enters the camp, the visiting chief kneels on one knee and holding his bow and arrows above his head with his right hand he makes a speech extolling the hosts and their goods and depreciating the things which his band has brought. The host then makes a similar speech, and trading begins.

Important items are traded by the two chiefs representing their respective bands, while small items can be exchanged by individual owners. In all cases, however, the technique of trading is the same. If an individual wants an object he extolls it by saying how fine it is. If a man values an object and wants much in exchange for it, instead of saying that it is very valuable he says that it is no good, thus showing his desire to keep it. "This ax is no good, it is very old, it is very dull," he will say, referring to his ax which the other wants. This argument is carried on in an angry tone of voice until a settlement is reached. When agreement has been reached each snatches the object out of the other's hand. If a man has bartered a necklace, instead of taking it off and handing it over, the other person must take if off with a show of force. Disputes, often leading to fights, occur when one party is a little premature and snatches the object before the other has finished arguing. The term "boca forte" (strong mouth) applies particularly to trading, for a man with a strong mouth gets what he wants and convinces the other that he, too, has made a good bargain. This method of trading contrasts sharply with that practiced among the Upper Xingú tribes where each party places a pile of goods opposite the article he wants, usually without saying a word. If agreement is not reached, each one eventually withdraws his goods.

619 583 After a satisfactory exchange of goods the two bands go hunting and prepare a quantity of food and dance as long as the food lasts. During these meetings marriages are sometimes arranged, but more often, when leaving, some strong man will try to steal the wife of some other man. If a fight should occur in which one man is killed the winner will take not only his wife or wives but his children and property as well.

619 Rev. L. W. Buckman gave the following account which reveals something of the tension between

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
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619 the bands. In 1937, the Kitánhlu band met a small group of Chiwáisu out hunting and attempted to trade with them. As the Chiwáisu were the smaller group, the Kitánhlu evidently tried to rob them. In the fight several Chiwáisu were killed. These bands did not meet again until 1941, but the Chiwáisu prowled around the Kitánhlu camp stealing what they could and trying to revenge their fallen comrades. In 1941, both bands happened to meet in Campos Novos, and the old quarrel was renewed. In the Chiwáisu camp there was a child which had been born to a Kitánhlu woman married to a Chiwáisu. A Kitánhlu took the child away by force saying that it belonged to his band. The Chiwáisu retaliated by shooting down a Kitánhlu. A fight followed in which the Chiwáisu were driven out after losing several of their band. For several years the Chiwáisu remained away and were attacked by the Saláunsu, a wild tribe living to the north of the Nambicuara. In the last few years, a temporary peace has been arranged by the Chiwáisu bringing presents of wax and honey to the Kitánhlu.

648 Except at telegraph stations, mission stations, and at the two Indian Posts, the Nambicuara have few contacts with their neighbors, the Paressí and Iranxe. The Paressí consider the Nambicuara as their inferiors, and, as far as is known, the two peoples do not intermarry. The Iranxe hold themselves aloof from both tribes.

The efforts of the Serviço de Proteção aos Indios to improve the lot of the Nambicuara have not been very successful. Part of this lack of success is, no doubt, due to the poor agricultural possibilities in the region. The Tolosa Post is situated in a barren region where it is difficult to grow sufficient food to maintain more than two or three families. The Nambicuara visit Tolosa, but after the food supply is consumed they move on. The other factor which makes it difficult to settle the Nambicuara in permanent villages is that they are hunters and shifting agriculturists. Lack of good agricultural land does not altogether explain this nomadic pattern of existence. Like the Caduveo who have excellent farming land the Nambicuara persist in continuing their traditional form of economy.

In contrast to the Paressí, who have become satisfactory employees of telegraph stations, mining camps, and mission stations, the Nambicuara

648 dependent upon the whites for metal tools, guns and ammunition, and feel it necessary to visit white settlements. The Nambicuara are not above visiting white men for treatment of injuries and cases of severe illness.

• 649 The interband relationships of the Eastern Nambicuara, although characterized by tensions and periodic open conflicts, are based on a recognition of common origin, common speech, and a degree of intercourse through trade, marriage, and the performance of dances in common. The relations with the so-called wild tribes to the north, on the other hand, are based on war, not just on raiding for loot and women, but on a war of extermination. Although the bands south of the telegraph line no longer participate in war, the bands north of the line still fight on occasion with their enemies which they call the Salúnsu and which the whites call the Beiço de Pau.

721

726 When preparing for a war the chief of the band takes the men into the woods and tells them that there are bad people to the north which they must kill. Then after singing a war song they set about making many arrows and war clubs. The night before the attack they camp near the village of the enemy. The men paint their bodies with the sap of some latex tree and their faces with urucú and charcoal. They then take leaves and stuff them into any holes in the ground or in trees around their camp. After all the holes are stopped up, they take the skin of an anteater, the skin of a toad, and the leaves of a tree, which are used in preventing rain, and burn them. The stopping of the holes is believed to prevent the enemy from hearing them, the smoke is to blind the enemy's enemies and, also, to make the enemy sleep soundly. The chief remains at this spot and sings all night with the shamans. At dawn the young men approach the huts of the enemy, stand in the doorways and shout, and when the occupants awaken they are shot down or clubbed. No one is spared. They then take whatever they can, burn the houses, and return to the chief and his singing shamans where the loot is distributed among the warriors.

621 The internal organization of the band is based upon kinship and is perpetuated through cross-cousin marriage. One belongs to the band of his or her mother. Julio explained that when the daughter of the wife whom he abducted from the Elótasu reaches puberty she will return to the

534 *kadiwa*, the nose flute, *waiditiwa*, and the five-tube panpipe, *dita*. The nose flute which is about 4 inches in diameter is made by sticking two round pieces of gourd together with resin. Three holes are made on one side, two holes providing finger stops, while air from one nostril is blown across the other. These flutes do not appear to have any ritual significance.

771 In reviewing the religious symbolism of the Nambicuara it appears that the following conclusions can be drawn. The *sikilidiñe* myth explains the origin of the Eastern Nambicuara and their rights to the territory which they now occupy. *Tauptá*, although not the cause of illness, explains why people die. *Tauptá* and *dilawawa* also account for the existence of shooting stars and the presence of rain. *Ulurá* appears to represent the ever-present forces of destruction inherent in the physical environment. Within the framework of these ultimate forces the Nambicuara carry on their struggle for existence assisted by and opposed by the members of their own kind. The security of the band depends upon the close cooperation of the kinsmen acting under the guidance of the chief. The *wãiwãe* flutes provide a supernatural sanction for the powers of the chief and thus help in enforcing and maintaining band solidarity. The flutes, furthermore, are a symbol of the common ancestry of the Eastern Nambicuara in that they relate the bands to the culture hero. The ghosts of the ancestors (*aydakadiwa*), like the living members of the band, must be well-treated in order to avoid danger to children and the perpetuation of the band.

● 619 But actual day-to-day danger to the individual comes from the members of other bands. Disputes over women and quarrels arising from the exchange of goods, as we have seen, lead to bloodshed and death. In the ultimate analysis each [621] band defends itself as a sovereign unit by force. The danger arising from the constant tension and suspicion between the bands is symbolized by the *enãwa* who bring illness, who create the storms which destroy the houses and fields, and who threaten the band with starvation by making hunting difficult. As direct attack by other bands is met with the physical forces of the band, so spiritual attack by the *enãwa* of other bands is met by the assistance of one's own *enãwa*. They help the shamans to draw out the evil objects

●619 which cause sickness, they have given the magical herbs whose smoke blinds the dangerous enemy, and the techniques which will drive away the storms. Thus the shaman operating on a symbolic level continues the struggle for survival which has been defined for the Nambicuara by the nature of their adjustment to their physical environment and their relationships to one another.

THE LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

833 The Nambicuara recognize sexual intercourse
[842] (wine-denditire) as the cause of pregnancy (kaldi-jitre). This act takes place in the woods while the husband and wife are out hunting or collecting, for it is considered improper to have sexual intercourse in public, even at night around the common camp fire. If a shaman should see a couple in
756 sexual embrace while practicing his rites it would
833 spoil his power. Although shamans use a special hut when calling their enemies there is always a chance that they may see a couple in the sexual act, so every effort must be made to avoid this
[834] danger. Shamans themselves abstain from sexual intercourse for 2 or 3 days before getting in contact with the spirits.

843 There appear to be no food taboos surrounding pregnancy among the Wakitire. The husband continues hunting and collecting as usual, but he must avoid working too hard in the field for
[847] fear of causing his wife to abort. Women do not practice abortion, and the Nambicuara did not mention any medicines used for this purpose.
[832] Honey is considered conducive to sexual vigor and is used by young couples. Childless marriages
[843 586] are attributed to sterility in women, and a man may abandon his wife for this reason.

844 Birth takes place in the house, or in the camp if the family is out hunting. Just before expecting
[824] the birth of a child the expectant mother drinks the juice of certain herbs which are believed to facilitate birth. The husband and two older women assist in the delivery. The woman kneels on the ground and is supported by her husband. The umbilical cord is tied with a certain vine and then cut with a bamboo sliver. Among the Kitaulhu it is bitten off by one of the midwives. The placenta is buried at the place of birth and when the umbilical cord dries and falls off, it, too,

[P. 182 (b)]